

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated June 1, 2005. Claims 1-14 are pending.

The title has been amended as requested by the Examiner. See page 2 of the Office Action in this request.

Claim 5 stands rejected under Section 112, second paragraph. It is believed that the changes to claim 5 above address and resolve any potential issue in this respect.

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Nagaseki. This Section 103(a) rejection is respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 as amended requires “a high frequency power source for applying high frequency power between the first and second electrodes; and a heating section for heating one of the first and second electrodes; wherein the substrate is placed on the heated electrode, and wherein at least one of the first and second electrodes is supported movably in a lateral direction of thermal expansion by the corresponding support member, and wherein said corresponding support member has a protruding stop portion that does not engage said one electrode at room temperature thereby permitting said one electrode to expand laterally toward the stop portion at high temperatures so as to allow for thermal expansion of said one electrode.” For example and without limitation, see the stop portions 6a (and/or 5a) shown on the engagement members 6 (and/or 5) in Figs. 2 and 3 of the instant application. In certain example embodiments, the thermal expansion of the electrodes is permitted because the stop portions 6a, 5a do not engage the electrode at room temperature, but may engage the electrode at higher temperatures, thereby permitting some amount of thermal expansion of the electrode before the stop portion(s) is/are engaged. By allowing an amount of lateral thermal expansion in this respect, the problem of

variation in vertical spacing between the two electrodes due to thermal expansion can be reduced. The cited art fails to disclose or suggest the aforesaid underlined features of claim 1.

Nagaseki discloses a plasma processing apparatus. However, Nagaseki fails to disclose or suggest that “*said corresponding support member has a protruding stop portion that does not engage said one electrode at room temperature thereby permitting said one electrode to expand laterally toward the stop portion at high temperatures so as to allow for thermal expansion of said one electrode*” as required by claim 1. Nagaseki is entirely unrelated to the invention of claim 1 in this respect. Tanaka also fails to disclose or suggest the aforesaid underlined and italicized features of claim 1.

Claim 9 as amended requires that “the heated electrode is supported by the first support member, said first support member comprising first and second protruding stop portions that do not engage the heated electrode at room temperature but can engage the first electrode at elevated temperatures thereby permitting the heated electrode to expand laterally toward the stop portions when heated so as to allow for thermal expansion thereof.” Again, Nagaseki fails to disclose or suggest these features of claim 9. Tanaka also fails to disclose or suggest the aforesaid underlined features of claim 9.

Numerous obviousness-type double patenting rejections are set forth on page 5 of the Office Action. These double patenting rejections are respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons. The aforesaid underlined features of claims 1 and 9, respectively, are not disclosed or suggested by any of US 5,487,786, 6,142,096, or 6,313,430. These patents are unrelated to the respective inventions of claims 1 and 9.

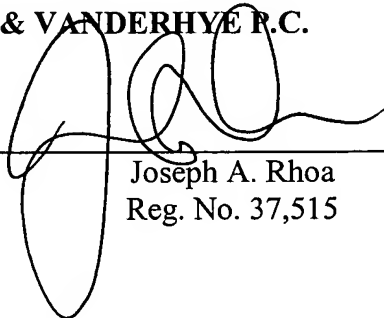
FUKUOKA et al
Appl. No. 10/680,213
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It is respectfully requested that all rejections be withdrawn. All claims are in condition for allowance. If any minor matter remains to be resolved, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned with regard to the same.

Respectfully submitted,

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